**NBDC Regional Stakeholders Meeting**

**Bahir Dar, July 23–24/2013**

**Notes of Amhara Region participants Group work**

The group work aimed at interactive discussion and listing of key RWM issues in the region along with the current activities, institutional set ups, challenges & opportunities, policies and actor compositions around the RWM programs in the region.

The Amhara team organized itself to a discussion facilitator (Dr. Tadesse Amsalu from Bahirdar University) and secretary (Dr. Birru Yitaferu from ARARI).

The discussion started with a need to understand the contextual definition of RWM which varies among different institutions (example: the definition of SLM and NBDC are not the same). But for the purpose of the group work the team agreed to stick to the wider NBDC definition of RWM which includes elements of biophysical, socio cultural, economic, institutional, livelihoods, environmental and policy aspects.

In identifying the key issues the team tried to divide them in to different agro ecological zones within the region: The highland area which receives adequate amount of rain and the low land area which suffers moisture stress. So the main RWM challenge of the highland areas is land degradation due to high rainfall and run-off loss and the key issue is about how to safely remove the water from crop fields whereas the challenge of the low land area is agriculture failure due to moisture stress and the key issue is how to better utilize the scarce water and recharge ground water.

The current practices along the RWM also vary with the agro ecology. Hence the practices at the higher areas include: SWC activities, safe drainage and recharging of streams depending on soil structure. The practices in the lower areas include: Agroforestry, land use system, drought tolerant crops, night storage of water, irrigated agriculture, water harvesting structures, spate irrigation, forage production, etc. The team disclosed in its discussion that though there are practices here and there by projects like SLM, PSNP, AGP, Government’s NRM regular programs, they are not well integrated and are based on just controlling soil erosion than improving productivity.

The group listed some of the institutional arrangements existing in the region as: Rural Development Command Posts, SLM platform at regional level, steering committees, Government’s extension structure from region to kebele level, watershed committee, User Associations, Credit Associations, Abay Basin Authority, etc.

NRM policies both at national level and regional level have also been mentioned. National level: Rural Development policy, Water policy. Regional level: Land Administration laws, the newly adopted commonly developed watershed management and administration proclamation, Environment protection policy, etc.

Regardless of the existence of numerous activities and sound policies, the group agrees that there is no tangible outcome in terms of change in NRM and livelihoods of the farmers owing to the poor integration of the institutions and programs and also weak level of implementation of the policies at ground level.

The opportunities and challenges for the NRM activities in the region were noted by the group. Some of the opportunities include: supporting government policies, availability of technology options, adequate rainfall at higher areas, community awareness of NRM, Government’s organizational structure, presence of a range of partners (Government institutions (like research, universities, extension), etc., NGOs, Research and Development partners, Private sector, etc.). The challenges include: scattered institutional arrangements, duplication of responsibilities among government offices (example: land administration and environmental protection offices, water administration and agricultural offices), weak enactment of policies, lack of accountability (M& E systems are weak), Practical knowledge and experience gap with new college graduates, shortage of resources, population pressure and limited employment opportunities, etc.

Representatives from the Bahirdar University, ARARI and the presidential office have been key contributors of the discussion. In general the discussion was participatory and all members actively engaged in the process and finally the agreed points have been written on a flip chart for presentation to workshop participants.

The group won the competition for its best organization of the presentation and valid points made based on the template given by the workshop organizers.

The following note is directly copied from the flip chart of the group.

**Current Key Issues**

* Land degradation and high run-off loss in the high rainfall areas
* Agricultural failure and drought in the low moisture areas

**Main activities and programs**

* Soil and water conservation
* Safe drainage of excess water
* Recharging streams
* Afforestation
* Land certification
* Cropping management
* Expansion of irrigation agriculture

**Opportunities**

* Enabling policies
* Rainfall availability
* Available technologies
* Labor availability
* Organizational set up – from kebele level
* Availability of partner institutions

**Key Actors**

* Government Institutions
* Community
* Development partners
* CBOs

**Institutional Arrangements**

* Rural Command Post system
* SLM Platform
* Steering Committee
* Government institutions structure up to PA level
* WUA
* Watershed Committee
* Community Organizations

**Policies**

* National Water and Rural Development policy
* Regional Land Use Law
* Communal developed watershed management and administration proclamation

**Challenges**

* Lack of institutional integration around Abay basin
* Policy implementation problem
* Knowledge and skill gap at all levels
* Resource shortage
* Poor livestock management

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